All You
Wanted To Know About

SPOKEN ENGLISH

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

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Preface

In the age of electronic communication and knowledge explosion, the criterion for keeping oneself abreast is a swift and precise acquisition of data. Success depends on an individual's ability to march with the times — not only to be influenced by his/her milieu, but to be able to make some creative contribution to it.

The present set of books are an attempt by Sterling Publishers to help usher in the new millennium with adequate preparation. It is hoped that this user-friendly series will benefit all sincere readers who desire to use English as an effective tool of communication.

Introduction

In the last two decades, there has been an unprecedented proliferation of institutes teaching spoken English; and literally millions of learners are enrolling themselves for one or more of these courses over the years.

This phenomenon indicates that there ~~is~~ great demand to acquire mastery over the spoken form of the language — English. The ability to speak fluently and accurately is considered a passport to success.

English continues to have an elitist flavour — as, for instance, getting educated in an English medium school enhances one's prestige.

No language is better than any other. The vernaculars in India are as good as English. Then why this indomitable urge to learn English — especially spoken English? The answer is not far to seek. English has a much larger currency than any regional language. It is spoken and understood in the educated circles everywhere. It continues to be the official medium at par with the national language — Hindi. It is

also the language in which questions in exams are framed.

But more than anything, every individual's experience is oriented towards oral communication. A person may not get an opportunity to write English often, but there is no dearth of contexts to speak English. It is no wonder, then, that people from various walks of life, different age groups and of varied interests are all eager to learn English through the shortest and easiest method possible.

The following pages are a means to this end.

Part One : Pointers

Fluency :

The ability to speak is initially acquired by imitation. If one observes the child's language learning process, this fact becomes obvious. The child hears, understands and then articulates. In the case of an adult learner the process may differ slightly because most people have other language skills before they learn to speak it fluently.

Fluency is the ability to express oneself readily and effortlessly.

The words of a fluent speaker flow smoothly. They are polished and graceful. One of the important aspects of learning a language and being genuinely proficient in it is to be able to speak it fluently.

Constant practice is essential for gaining fluency in speaking English. The other three skills complement and supplement the skill of speaking. Spoken English is a skill which all learners want to perfect because the ability to speak well is a passport to success in every field. A person who speaks English correctly with the right pronunciation, grammar and

vocabulary catches and retains the attention of his/her audience. It is a pleasure to speak/hear good English being spoken.

Speaking is a process in which thought and its articulation are almost simultaneous. It is not like writing where there is much gap for contemplation and connection between thought and expression. Speaking must be spontaneous to be effective. If a question is asked one cannot say that one will think for a few minutes and then reply. The reply has to be immediate. That is the reason why for a learner it is essential to practise even

thinking in English so that no time gets wasted in translating from the mother-tongue into English and then saying these aloud. Also, the most common mistakes in usage occur due to this instinctive activity of translation. When a learner gets over this and begins to think in English, he/she has taken a positive step towards speaking fluently. Some of the tools necessary to acquire fluency are given below.

Contractions :

Speech uses language in an informal and condensed form. This

is obvious to learners of English because short forms of various words and expressions are most commonly used in English conversation. A list of contractions commonly used while speaking is given below. It should be noted that these expressions are perfectly acceptable in spoken English but not in the written form, unless it is an informal piece of writing such as a personal letter.

1. Pronouns + Verb (to be)

   I am — I'm
   We are — We're
   You are — You're
   He/She/It is — He's / She's / It's
   They are — They're

2. Pronouns + Verb (to have)
   I have — I've
   I had — I'd
   You have — You've
   You had — You'd
   We have — We've
   We had — We'd
   He /She / It has — He's / She's / It's
   They have — They've
   He /She /It had — He'd /She'd/It'd
   They had — They'd
3. Pronoun + Verb (will, shall, would)
   I will / shall — I'll
   We will / shall — We'll
   I would — I'd
   We would — We'd
   You will / shall — You'll
   You would — You'd

He/She/It will/shall — He'll/
She'll /It'll
He/She/It would — He'd/She'd/
It'd
They will / shall — They'll
They would — They'd

4. Auxiliary Verb + negative
is not — isn't
are not — aren't
was not — wasn't
were not — weren't
have not — haven't
has not — hasn't
had not — hadn't
do not — don't
does not — doesn't
did not — didn't
cannot — can't

could not — couldn't
will not — won't
shall not — shan't
would not — wouldn't
should not — shouldn't
must not — musn't
may not — mayn't
might not — mightn't
ought not — oughtn't
need not — needn't
dare not — daren't

Pronunciation :

One of the major problems which learners of English face is its pronunciation. The English pronunciation system is irregular — there is no one-to-one correspondence between spelling

and pronunciation. For instance, the alphabet 'a' is pronounced in three different ways in the words 'apple' 'art' 'about'! This may not be very difficult for those who speak English as their mother - tongue because they learn it by hearing correct English being spoken around them. But those who learn English as a second or foreign language find its erratic pronunciation a major hurdle in speaking the language properly.

In addition to this, the pattern of accent in English is a second point of difficulty. Unlike the rhythm and accent of Indian languages

which is even, English speech patterns lay emphasis on some specific syllables and a great variety of intonations. All this makes the rhythm of English greatly different from the familiar ones heard in this country. Therefore, much effort has to be spent in mastering the correct pronunciation and rhythm of English.

Sounds :

The English alphabet has 26 symbols but the number of sounds they represent are 44. This implies that the written symbols

are not adequate to represent all the 44 sounds used in speaking the language. From this inadequacy arises the problem of pronunciation. The learner is often confused because the appearance of the word — its spelling — is not a reliable guide to its pronunciation. The dictionary, of course, gives the pronunciation of each word in brackets after the main entry. But before one can benefit from such entries it is essential to know what the 44 sounds of English are and how they are to be pronounced. The list below gives these details. It begins

with vowels — there are five vowels in the English alphabet and 21 consonants while in sounds (called *phoneme*) there are 20 vowel sounds and 24 consonant sounds.

1. /ə/ as in fath<u>er</u>. This sound corresponds approximately to the first alphabet of most Indian languages. /ə/ is pronounced by keeping the lips loose and tongue low. It is used only in unaccented syllables of words. It is a short sound.
2. /ʌ/ as in b<u>u</u>t. This sound is similar to the one above except

that it is pronounced with more force. It is only used in accented syllables.

3. /ɑ:/ as in f<u>ar</u>. This sound is pronounced like the sound of the second Hindi alphabet. The mouth is wide open and the lips are spread. This is a long sound as indicated by the two dots which accompany the symbol.
4. /æ/ as in <u>a</u>nt. This is a new sound for Indian learners as it does not have an equivalent in the Indian languages. It is pronounced by raising the tongue higher than in the above sound and opening

the lips wide. Many of the words a child learns have this sound, for instance, apple, bat, cat, mat, sat, etc.

5. /ɜ:/ as in bird. This is again a new sound as it has no corresponding sound in the Indian languages. But it comes close to the first sound to which a hint of /r/ is added. Together they form a long sound as indicated by the dots. Since /r/ is generally not prominently pronounced in English unless at the beginning of a word as in 'rain', 'run', etc., the 'r' in bird forms a part of the

long vowel /3:/. It is pronounced by holding the lips tightly and bringing the jaws close to each other.

6. /I/ as in pit. This is a simple sound corresponding to the sound of the third Hindi alphabet. It is pronounced from the middle of the mouth with the tongue in a raised position. It is a short sound.
7. /i:/ as in feel. This is the longer version of the previous sound, also familiar to Indian learners because of its presence in our languages. It is pronounced in

the same way as /I/ except that it has more length than /I/. Confusion between these two sounds leads to mispronunciation of pairs of words such as sit - seat, fill - feel, fit - feet, etc.

8. /ʊ/ as in full. This is a short sound which has an equivalent in the Indian vowels. It is pronounced by keeping the lips closely rounded and the tongue in a medial position.

9. /u:/ as in shoot. This is the longer version of the above sound. It is pronounced in the same way as above except for the enhanced

length. Varying this length may result in confusion between the pronunciation of pairs of words such as f<u>u</u>ll - f<u>oo</u>l.

10. /e/ as in b<u>e</u>d. This is a short sound familiar to Indian learners. Its corresponding longer sound is a diphthong or double sounds both in English and Indian languages. /e/ is pronounced with lips loose and tongue in raised position.

11. /ɔ/ as in h<u>o</u>t. This is a new sound for some Indian learners. In Bengali, the first alphabet has the same sound. It is a short sound pronounced with

rounded lips with the back of the tongue in a raised position.

12. /ɒ:/ as in call. This is the longer version of the above sound. It is a new sound for most Indian learners. It is pronounced in the same way as /ɔ/ except that /ɔ:/ needs more time for articulation as is indicated by the two dots in the symbol.

These 12 comprise the single vowel sounds in English. The remaining eight vowels are diphthongs which together form a single vowel unit.

1. /əʊ/ as in home. This is a rather difficult sound for Indian

learners and is often replaced by a single vowel sound (monophthog) /o/ in Indian English. The British variant is pronounced by combining /ə/ and /ʊ/. The lips begin from a loose position to a rounded one. The tongue position changes from back to front and is raised.

2. /aʊ/ as in found. This is a familiar sound to Indian learners because it corresponds to one of the two diphthongs found in Indian languages. It is a combination of short /a/ and /ʊ/ sounds. It begins in the

middle of the mouth and moves forward and the lips get rounded by the end.

3. /aɪ/ as in f<u>i</u>ve. Also a familiar sound, it is a combination of short /a/ and /I/ sounds. The mouth is wide open in beginning and compresses as the sound proceeds. The back of the tongue is used first and then the middle of the tongue.
4. /eɪ/ as in p<u>ai</u>n. This is a new sound as Indian learners often fail to distinguish between this and the previous one. The difference is in the beginning of

the two sounds. /ɐɪ/ begins in the middle of the mouth, not at the back. The rest is the same as the above sound.

5. /ɔI/ as in coil. This is also a new sound formed by the combination of short /ɔ/ and /ʌ/. It begins with rounded lips and then moves to a loose position. The sound moves from the back of the mouth to the front.

6. /ʌə/ as in fear. For the Indian learners this is a new sound formed by the combination of /I/ beginning in the front of the mouth and moving to /ə/

pronounced from the back of the mouth. The lips are neutral.

7. /ɛə/ as in layer. This is a sound often mispronounced. It is formed by combining /e/ with /ə/. The movement is from the front to the back of the mouth. The lips are neutral in the articulation of /ɛə/.

8. /ʊə/ as in poor. Pronounced by combining /ʊ/ and /ə/ sounds.

There is no dearth of symbols in the English alphabet as far as the consonants are concerned because 21 alphabets represent 24 sounds.

Most of them are found in the Indian languages.

1. /p/ as pen
2. /b/ as in bed
3. /t/ as tap
4. /d/ as in doll
5. /k/ as in king
6. /g/ as in gun
7. /s/ as in sad
8. /z/ as in zoo

/z/ is a new sound for most Indian learners. It is used in Urdu but not in other languages. /z/ is pronounced by allowing air to come out slowly through an aperture between the tongue and

the front of the hard palate, behind the upper set of teeth.

9. /ʃ/ as in ship
10. /ʒ/ as in measure

/ʃ/ is a new symbol because there is no adequate representation for it in the English alphabet. But the sound is very common and often encountered in all Indian languages.

/ʒ/ is both a new symbol and a new sound. It is pronounced in almost the same way as /z/ but the position of the aperture shifts to the middle of the hard palate.

11. /ʧ/ as in chair
12. /dʒ/ as in jam

These two are new symbols but very popular sounds in Indian languages. Their pronunciation should create no problem for the learners.

13. /f/ as in fox
14. /v/ as in van

Both these are new sounds pronounced by creating an opening between the upper teeth and the lower lip so that the air can pass through it with friction. /f/ is often confused with /p/ or its aspirated form by Indian speakers. This can be corrected by avoiding the use of the upper lip and instead using the upper teeth. /v/ is

similarly confused with /w/ which can be corrected by the same method.

15. /ɵ/ as in <u>th</u>ink

16. /ð/ as in <u>th</u>en

These are new symbols and the sounds are also slightly different from their usual Indian variant. The sounds can be pronounced correctly by positioning the tongue between the two sets of teeth before air is allowed to pass through. The Indian variant is pronounced by putting the tongue behind the upper teeth which is not accurate.

17. /m/ as in <u>m</u>an

18. /n/ as in net
19. /ŋ/ as in ink

/ŋ/ is a new symbol but has numerous representations in the Indian alphabets because the first three lines of consonants end with some variation in this sound. It is pronounced nasally by blocking the mouth with the soft palate.

20. /r/ as in rush
21. /l/ as in late
22. /h/ as in hide
23. /w/ as in win
24. /j/ as in Yes

/j/ is a new symbol but a common sound in Indian languages.

Syllable :

In English a word which has more than one vowel is divided into syllables. A syllable is a unit of language which contains one vowel and one or more consonants. The following patterns are found in English.

(V=Vowel; C=Consonant)

1. V - a
2. VC - on
3. CV - to
4. CVC - lad
5. CCVC - step
6. CVCC - first
7. CCVCC - chips
8. CVCCC (C) - text(s)

The dictionary gives syllable division for each word by putting dots or dashes to separate one syllable from another. For instance, the word 'syllable' has three syllables and is written in the dictionary as 'syl-la-ble'.

Accent :

English words which have two or more syllables are pronounced in such a way that only one of the syllables gets the maximum prominence. This is called accent and is indicated in the dictionary by a dash placed on top of the accented part of the word. For

instance, the word 'about' has two syllables and the second syllable is accented. This can be represented as a-`bout — /ə/baʊt/.

Often the English spoken by people is difficult to understand because of wrong accentuation of words. Therefore, while learning to speak English fluently, it is essential to pay attention to the accent pattern.

Words Often Mispronounced :

There are various causes of mispronunciation, some of which are illustrated below.

1. Wrong sound used

   /ʃ/ and /s/ /ʃɪp/ — ship pronounced as /sɪp/ - sip

/z/ and /dʒ/ /zu:/ — zoo
pronounced as /dʒu:/ —jew

/v/ and /w/ /vaɪn/ — vine
pronounced as /waɪn/ —wine

/f/ and /p^h/ /fæn/ — fan
pronounced as /p^hæn/ —pan

2. Silent alphabets pronounced
'b' is silent in comb, subtle
'k' is silent in knot, knife, know
'p' is silent in psychology
'r' is silent in 'sir', 'father'

3. Consonant clusters
street - / stri:t/ ; school - /sku:l/
textual - /tekstʃjʊəl /

4. Misplaced accent
Cafe - /kə'fe/ pronounced as
/keɪf/

Hotel - /hə'teɪl/ pronounced as /'hotl/

Police - /pə'li:s/ pronounced as /'polis/

Garage - /gə'ra:ʒ/ pronounced as /'gæredʒ/

5. Syllabic consonants : In English /l/ and /n/ at the end of a word or syllable does the work of a vowel.

sudden - /'sʌdn/ pronounced as /sə'den/

little- /'lɪtl/ pronounced as /ɪ'tɪl/

bottle - /'bɔtl/ pronounced as 'bɔ/tɪl/

middle - /'mɪdl/ pronounced as /mɪ'dɪl/

Reading :

Reading is an important skill to be mastered by the learners of English, especially those who want to appear for competitive examinations. The ability to read and understand a given passage is often set as a test in most examinations. In addition to this, regular practice of loud reading improves a person's ability to speak English. Beginners can perfect the skill of reading by recording their performance in the

initial stages and listening to it a few times. The flaws in reading which come out in the process can be corrected. If this process is followed diligently, reading skills are sure to improve.

Intonation :

The rhythm of English derived from maintaining the correct pattern of accent in a sentence is called intonation. This is important not only while reading but also while speaking. Ignorance of the right intonation makes the language sound un-English.

The basic fact of intonation to be remembered and practised is that only content words (noun, pronoun, lexical verb, adjective, adverb) are accented in a sentence; function words (auxiliary verb, preposition and conjuction) are not accented.

Example :

'India is a beau'tiful 'country.

There is a variation in intonation between statements and questions. Often while using language informally, a sentence which has the structure of a statement can be used as a question

by changing the intonation from the falling to the rising tone.

'Is 'he 'coming? — question

'He is 'coming — statement

He is 'coming? — question (informal)

Intonation can also be used to imply other than literary meaning or for emphasis.

'You are 'so in'telligent. (sarcastic)

He 'is a 'fool. (emphatic)

The practice of such structures makes one proficient in English.

Unfortunately, the proliferation of the electronic media has done much harm to people's desire to read, as there is no substitute for the pleasure of reading.

Part Two : Practice

Dialogue :

When two people talk to each other it is usually in the form of a dialogue. In formal context, an exchange of ideas between two groups or nations is also called a dialogue. A dialogue is marked by precision. The speaker has to give a reply to whatever is being asked. A dialogue is usually brief as compared to other spoken forms. In everyday context, we often have dialogues with a number of people

in various situations. Often, in a dilemma we have a dialogue with our own selves. This is interestingly depicted in movies where the other self (conscience) appears in the mirror or the room and talks to a person. Since dialogue is the most common spoken context, its practice is beneficial in increasing fluency and confidence in exchanging ideas through the medium of English.

1
On the Telephone

A: Hello

B: Is this 7895643?

A: Yes it is.
B: May I speak to Biley?
A: Just a moment. May I know who's calling?
B: I am his friend, Abhay.
A: Hold on for a minute. I'll call him.
B: That's alright.
A. Hello, Abhay. I'm sorry Biley has just gone out.
B: When is he expected?
A: He should be back in an hour. Will you leave your number? I'll ask him to call you up.
B: I'm calling up from a pay phone.

A: Then, would you like to leave a message?

B: I think I'll do that. Tell him that I'll collect the papers from him tomorrow. Do you know whether he has the papers with him?

A: No. I'm sorry I don't know.

B: In that case I think I'll call up again after an hour.

A: I think that would be better. I'll tell Biley you had called.

B: Thank you. It's very kind of you.

2
Railway Reservation

Passenger: Excuse me. Please let me know if I can get a ticket to Goa from here.

Clerk: Sorry, madam. You have to go to counter No. 4. This counter is for group booking.

Passenger: Can you tell me at least whether reservation is available for the 25th?

Clerk: The enquiry counter is at the other end of the corridor.

Passenger: Thank you. Here is the enquiry counter. Let me

find out the reservation status for the 25th.

Clerk: Yes, madam. What can I do for you?

Passenger: I want to go to Goa on the 25th. Please tell me if reservation is available on that day.

Clerk: Let me check. Please wait a while. In which class would you like to travel?

Passenger: Three-tier sleeper or third AC.

Clerk: There are some berths available in three-tier

sleeper but none in third AC.

Passenger: Thank you. Must I go to Counter No. 4 to book my ticket?

Clerk: That's right, madam.

Passenger: Thank you very much.

At the Bank

Clerk: May I help you, sir?

Customer: I want to encash this cheque.

Clerk: Do you have an account in this bank?

Customer: Yes, I have. Here is my pass-book.

Clerk: Would you like to deposit the cheque for clearance?

Customer: How much time would it take for the money to be deposited in my account?

Clerk: It will take about three days, since it is a local cheque.

Customer: But I need the money urgently.

Clerk: In that case, you have to go to the bank on which this cheque is drawn.

Customer: Will they give me the money today?

Clerk: Yes. This is a bearer cheque. You have to sign behind it and present it at the saving's counter of the bank. The clerk will give you a token with a number on it. Then you have to wait till the number is called by the cashier. When you produce your token at the cash counter they'll give you the money.

Customer: Thank you very much. You are very helpful.

Clerk: You are most welcome, sir. It is my pleasure.

4
At the Ration Shop

A: Please stand in the queue, gentleman. You cannot break the queue and go ahead.

B: I am sorry. I didn't realise there was a queue. There is such a crowd near the entrance.

A: I know. People should be more disciplined. Then they would get their ration much faster.

B: May I stand behind you?

A: Please do.

B: Do you think they have a stock of sugar in the shop today.

A: I'm not sure. I took my quota of sugar last week. Today I have come for kerosene.

B: I want only sugar and edible oil.

A: I heard someone in the queue ahead saying that edible oil was out of stock.

B: Oh, no. Then I have to come back another day. It is such a waste of time.

A: I agree. But we are helpless.

B: Look, your turn is about to come.

A: Yes, thank God. I was quite tired of waiting.

5

Electricity Complaints Cell

Customer: I want to register a complaint.

Clerk: Please tell me about the nature of the complaint, sir.

Customer: There are frequent power cuts in our apartments. And even when we have electricity, the voltage is so low that none of the appliances function properly.

Clerk: For how long has this complaint persisted?

Customer: Earlier it used to happen once in a while. But for the last four days it has been happening almost every day.

Clerk: We will require your consumer number and address.

Customer: Here is my consumer card.

Clerk: Sir, you have not yet paid last month's electricity bill.

Customer: I have the money here. Should I give it to you?

Clerk: No, Sir, you have to pay the bill in the accounts section on the next floor.

Customer: Should I pay it now? Or after registering the complaint.

Clerk: You may pay the bill by the time I enter your complaint in the register. When you come back, you may sign the register and note down your complaint number.

Customer: How long do you think it will take to set it right?

Clerk: Only a couple of days, sir.

Customer: That will be a big relief. Thank you. I shall be back soon.

Clerk: I'll wait for you, sir.

6

Making an Appointment

A: Excuse me, madam. I want to meet the director.

B: Sorry, sir. You cannot meet him today. He is in a meeting now. And in the afternoon he plans to visit the site.

A: Could I meet him tomorrow, then?

B: I'll have to check his appointment diary. Please be seated.

A: Thank you.

B: Oh, I forgot. The boss is going out of station tomorrow for a couple of days.

A: I'm not in a hurry. I can wait till he comes back.

B: In that case, it would be better if you made an appointment. I shall note it down in the diary. Do you have any preference of date and time?

A: Let me see. Today is Monday. Could I see him on Friday?

B: Sorry, sir. That's not possible either. The boss likes to devote Fridays to paper work.

A: What about Saturday, then?

B: We are closed on Saturdays.

A: Well, the best thing would be to put it off till next Monday, then.

B: Yes. That'd be fine. He is totally free on Monday. What time would you like to come?

A: I prefer an appointment in the morning.

B: Would 10.30 suit you, sir?

A: Yes, that's perfect. 10.30 on Monday next, isn't that night?

B: That's right, sir. I've noted it down. Good day, sir.

A: Good day and thank you.

7

In a Bus

Passenger: I want a ticket to M.G. Road.

Conductor: Sorry, madam. This bus does not go to M.G. Road.

Passenger: But I thought all buses that go to the station pass M.G. Road.

Conductor: That's not true. Most buses going to the station do pass M.G. Road. But this bus takes a different route.

Passenger: What should I do now?

Conductor: Please get down at the next stop and wait for bus number 465. It will take you to M. G. Road by the shortest route.

Passenger: Thank you very much. Don't I have to buy a ticket?

Conductor: You do. Please give me two rupees. I'll give you a ticket from here to the next stop.

Passenger: Here you are.

Conductor: This is a ten-rupee note. Don't you have change?

Passenger: Let me check again. Ah, here is a two-rupee coin.

Conductor: Thank you, madam. Here is your ticket.

8
Hiring a Taxi

Traveller: Do you have taxis for hire for long distance journeys?

Agent: Yes, sir, we do. Please take a seat and I'll give you the details.

Traveller: Thank you. I want to know your charges first.

Agent: We charge five rupees per kilometre for petrol

vehicles and three rupees per kilometres for diesel vehicles. You have to pay two hundred rupees per day for the driver and waiting charges are fifty rupees per hour. If your stay is overnight you have to bear the food and accommodation charges of the driver.

Traveller: Well, that's very clearly explained. Now let's talk about my journey.

Agent: Where would like to go, sir?

Traveller: To a place about hundred kilometres from here. We shall leave in the morning and be back by night.

Agent: How many of you are going?

Traveller: My wife and I with our two children.

Agent: Then a small car will be suitable.

Traveller: Yes, that's true.

Agent: When would you like to travel, sir?

Traveller: This Sunday.

Agent: Let me make a note of it. Please sign here, sir.

Traveller: Shall I have to pay an advance?

Agent: Yes, sir. Please give two hundred rupees.

Traveller: Here you are.

Agent: Thank you, sir. Here is your receipt.

Traveller: Thank you.

Introduction

Atul: Hello! I am Atul. What is your name?

Neeraj: My name is Neeraj.

Atul: I have never seen you here before.

Neeraj: Today is my first day at office.

Atul: Oh, no wonder! Have you got the job recently?

Neeraj: No, I have been working in this company for the last two years. I was in the South before this. I got a transfer to this place recently.

Atul: Did you ask for a transfer?

Neeraj: Yes, of course. I did. You see, I got married recently and my wife has a good job here. So I decided to seek a transfer.

Atul: That's nice. I feel we shall soon become good friends.

Neeraj: I'm happy to hear you say so. Actually I was feeling quite lonely.

Atul: Why don't you and your wife come to visit us this evening? My wife and I shall be delighted.

Neeraj: You are very kind. We would love to come. Thank you.

Atul: You are welcome.

10
Asking the Way

A: Excuse me, could you show me the way to the Central Telegraph Office?

B: The Central Telegraph Office? Let me see.... Yes. I think I'll be able to give you the directions.

A: Is it very far from here?

B: Oh, no. You can go there walking. Proceed straight along this road till you come to a crossing.

A: I should go straight till I reach the first crossing?

B: That's right. Then you have to turn left into Tilak Road.

A: From the first crossing I should turn left into Tilak road. Is that right?

B: Yes, perfect. Where the road ends you will find some traffic lights. Turn left there and you'll see the CTO right ahead of you.

A: I've to turn left at the end of Tilak Road when I come to traffic lights and then walk ahead, right?

B: Yes, you've got it.

A: Let me repeat the whole thing just to be sure.

B: As you wish.

A: I should turn left at the first crossing and then left again at the first traffic lights. Am I right?

B: No, not at the first traffic lights. You have to take the left turning when Tilak Road comes to an end, that is the last traffic lights.

A: Now I've got the idea. Thanks a lot.

B: You are welcome.

11
Renting a House

A: Is anyone at home?

B: Yes. What do you want?

A: I saw your advertisement in the newspaper about a house on rent.

B: Yes?

A: Could I see the house, please?

B: Just a moment. Let me get the key.

A: How many rooms does the house have?

B: It has three bed-rooms, a drawing room, a dining hall, two balconies, a sit-out, a

kitchen, two bathrooms, a garage and servants quarters.

A: Does it have some open space for children to play in?

B: Yes, it has a lawn in the front and a small kitchen garden behind.

A: What about water supply?

B: Municipal water comes for an hour every morning. But there is a 24-hour supply from overhead tanks.

A: Does this locality have any problem of power supply?

B: The scheduled power cuts are inescapable. Otherwise, there is no such problem.

A: What about security?

B: There were a couple of thefts in the past. Now we have appointed a night watchman. After that there hasn't been any untoward incident.

A: Thank you very much. Well, about the rent ...

B: I'm sorry, you'll have to discuss that with my mother. She's not at home now. Please take down our phone number. You can speak to her in the evening.

A: I'll do that. Thanks again.

B: You are welcome.

12
Dinner Invitation

A: Hello, what a pleasant surprise! Do come in and sit down.

B: Thank you. But I don't have much time today.

A: Won't you have a cup of tea?

B: No, thank you. Some other time, perhaps.

A: Where are you going in such a hurry?

B: Oh, I've to visit all my friends. That's why I've come to see you too.

A: Anything special?

B: I would like to invite you to dinner on Saturday at my place.

A: That's wonderful! What's the occasion?

B: Nothing much. Actually, I didn't want to tell anyone. But there's no harm in telling you. It's my husband's birthday.

A: I don't see any reason to keep it a secret.

B: Oh, you don't know my husband! He's terribly shy. And if the guests know it's his birthday, they'll come with gifts and things. He will hate that. With much coaxing I've made him agree to this dinner party.

A: Ha! Ha! I know men are strange! You'd best not tell anyone then.

B: Yes. You too should keep it a secret. And do come with your entire family.

A: I'll surely come. Thanks for the invitation.

B: The pleasure is mine. See you on Saturday, then. Come by 7 p.m.

A: OK. Bye.

Conversation :

A conversation is very similar to a dialogue except that there are more then two speakers. Of course, quite often the two words are used synonymously without making such a fine distinction. But to simplify we shall take conversation to mean an exchange of ideas among a group of people.

Spontaneity is essential in a verbal exchange just as we noticed in the dialogues. Communication is incomplete unless it is received and replied to by another person. To be able to converse the two important

skills needed are understanding and speaking. Here, too, fluency and speed are of essence. For a conversation to remain alive all the participants should contribute equally and respond immediately to what is being discussed. Long pauses, silence, hesitation or repetition are barriers to a good conversation.

The following practice structures serve to introduce the learner to the art of conversation. In actual contexts he/she will be able to improve and elaborate in order to perfect the art of conversation.

1
Drama School

A: Listen, everybody. I've an important announcement to make.

B: Hear! Hear! Our hero is disclosing something momentous.

A: Really, this no joking matter. Can't you be serious for a change?

C: OK, we won't make fun of you anymore. Tell us what you wanted to.

D: Oh, I already know what he wants to announce. I saw the

notice on the board this morning.

E: You mean the notice about the National Drama Competition?

A: Of course, that's what I wanted to say. But everyone seems to know about it already.

F: Don't feel bad. Let's plan instead how to win the competition.

B: You are right. We have to win the first prize.

E: I agree with you. But how shall we prepare ourselves?

C: The first thing to do is to select a good play.

A: It should have a part for all of us.

D: Shall we repeat the one we staged for our annual day last year.

F: No. I don't think that play is suitable for a competition It's too light-hearted. What we need is a more serious play.

B: Right. Let's think of a play which gives us scope to display all the lessons in acting which we have learnt in these two years.

A: Should we choose a tragedy or a comedy? A classic play or a modern one?

E: Before we decide we have to read the rules of the competition carefully.

D: According to the notice, the competition has more than one category. I'm sure there must be all these categories you mentioned.

A: But the question is : should we concentrate on one play or should we participate in all the categories.

B: I think we should take up one category for our group. I'm sure the juniors also want to take part.

C: That's true. Let's call for an informal meeting and discuss all these issues.

X: Students, I'm glad to find all of you here.

All: Good morning, sir.

X: You look very excited. What's the matter?

A: Sir, we were discussing the National Drama Competition.

X: Oh, good. That means you've read the notice. I came to talk to you about the same thing.

B: We thought we should sit together with our juniors and plan the whole thing.

X: Wonderful. I'm just coming from their class. They too feel the same way. Let's all meet in Room No. 10 at 2 o'clock.

All: Sure, sir. We'll all be there.

2
Cricket

A: Do you think India will win this tournament?

B: I hope so. But there seems to be very little chance of winning.

C: Specially since they lost the first match.

D: It's all because of the captain. He made all the wrong decisions from the moment he won the toss.

E: You can't really blame a single individual. Cricket is a team effort. Unless the entire team contributes something, victory is impossible.

A: But look at how the other teams are playing. They seem to be winning all the time.

B: That's not true. In every game one team has to lose so that the other team wins.

D: I know what you say is logical. But when India loses all of us feel terribly depressed.

C: Actually the problem is that we don't produce many world class players.

A: I know that. Our team constantly depends on one or two star players and the pressure on them is such that they are bound to perform badly.

E: Then what is the solution? Will India continue to play like this and never become champions again?

B: The only solution is to select a better team. There should be no bias during selections.

C: And a young player should be given a chance more often. After all, practice makes one perfect.

D: Even the time and opportunity for training which one team gets are inadequate. Their training should be more rigorous at least before important events.

A: Another point is to spot talent early and nurture it.

C: That is very difficult. Don't you see, in every lane and in every park children are playing cricket all the time. It is the most popular sport. Still we are unable to find any great players among them.

E: That is because sport is still not taken seriously in our country.

It is not a part of the curriculum in most schools.

B: And parents also play a major role in discouraging their children. For them, standing first in class is more important than being selected for the school cricket team.

A: It is time to open special sports schools. At the college level, special institutions for physical education are not adequate.

D: You are right. By the time a student comes to college he/she is too old to become a good sportsperson. Real talent

should be spotted early, when the child is 5-6 years old.

C: Let us hope the authorities pay attention to this matter. Then we shall see India win all matches.

B: Won't that be wonderful!

3
Elections

A: Are you on your way to the polling booth?

B: Yes, we are. What about you?

C: There is a huge crowd in front of the booth. We thought of going there after some time.

A: I think it is not a good idea. Soon the sun will become too hot for us to wait in the queue indefinitely. Let us stand in the queue now. Our turn will soon come.

B: Then you better accompany us.

D: This is the first time I'm casting my vote. I feel very excited.

A: You'll soon get disillusioned. Most people these days don't even take the trouble of exercising their franchise.

C: Considering the malpractices that take place during elections, it is not surprising

that most of the educated and affluent people stay away from the polling station.

D: That's very wrong. To ignore what is wrong is as bad as doing something wrong. It is the duty of all citizens to cast their votes. Otherwise how will the system improve?

B: I agree with you. That is why on the day of the election I set out early and cast my vote.

E: If you are really serious about your vote you must hurry up. Otherwise someone else might misuse your vote.

D: How is that?

A: Don't you know? Someone impersonates you and uses up your vote. By the time you reach the booth there is no vote left for you to cast.

D: But such things must have disappeared now that we have photo identity cards.

B: Of course, the authorities are trying to streamline the system. But many things still remain to be done.

D: Let's hope that with the introduction of electronic voting machines all malpractices will disappear.

C: Won't that be a great achievement! Our hard-earned freedom would have come of age when that happens.

E: I'm sure all of us are looking forward to such a glorious future.

4
Interview

A: Next candidate, please go in.

B: Excuse me, may I come in?

C: Please come in and take your seat.

B: Thank you, sir.

D: Mr. B why have you applied for this job?

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B: Madam, I am interested in teaching.

C: Do you have any experience in teaching?

B: Yes, sir. I have been teaching on a part-time basis in a private junior college.

E: But you have never worked in a degree college?

B: No, madam. After my post-graduation, I was busy doing research. Therefore, I didn't want to take up something which I could not do justice to.

A: Then why are you taking up a full-time job now?

B: Madam, I'm almost on the verge of submitting my dissertation. Now I'll be free to teach.

F: These days most people prefer working in the industry. Such jobs are highly paid. Or they want bureaucratic jobs with lots of power. What makes you choose teaching?

C: Especially when your CV mentions that you are a brilliant student.

B: Sir, money, power and such things do not compare with ideals. Unless teachers are role models, from where will

students acquire the right values? The teacher shapes both the industrialist and the bureaucrat. Therefore, the teaching profession requires the best students as its members.

D: I'm glad you have such high ideals. But teachers generally become cynical when they find students indifferent and colleagues quite unbearable.

B: Madam, if students are indifferent, the fault is most often that of the teacher. And colleagues are also human beings. Human relations are at

best complex, whether it is the family, neighbourhood, society, or place of work.

E: You are right. Mr. B, you are very mature for your age.

B: Thank you, madam. I had an excellent upbringing. My parents instilled the essential values in me. Then my teachers carried this forward. I was very fortunate.

C: Did you have favourite teachers who left a lasting impression on you?

B: Yes, sir. I did. Or should I say I do; one of the school teachers is still my model.

D: Tell us about him.

B: He used to teach us in high school. He was such a brilliant person that his book was prescribed all over the state. But he never left his insignificant school job for more fame or money. He said that the pleasure he got in moulding young minds was more precious to him than anything else in life.

F: That's nice to hear. We hope you will also be as good a teacher as he was.

B: Thank you, sir. I shall certainly try my best.

F: Now tell us something about your research and show us copies of your publications.
B: Here they are, sir.

Elocution :

The two earlier modes of spoken English are mainly encountered in informal contexts, but elocution is a purely formal mode of speaking. It is what we would call a speech. To give speech training to young learners, elocution is very popular at the school level. Often elocution competitions are organised and the participants effectively acquire a special manner of speaking.

An elocution is to speaking as an essay is to writing — in both a specific topic is given to structure the ideas of the user. The speaker/ writer has to express his/her ideas on the given topic cogently, clearly, briefly and effectively. Both grammar and vocabulary play a very important part here. The English being spoken in such a formal context as an elocution should be grammatically correct and the words used to express the ideas should be suitable to the context, simple without being slipshod. In addition to these, correct pronunciation, accent and

intonation are very essential. And finally the content of the speech is also primary because however perfect your language is, you cannot hold the attention of listeners unless your ideas are worth listening to. Therefore, to be able to practise speaking, the one noteworthy point is to also acquire subject matter for which the language is suitable. It would be sad to gain mastery over English alone and not to have anything to say in English.

Some samples of elocution are given below. It is hoped that learners will get many

opportunities to speak both in the class room situation and in more varied groups on numerous topics apart from the ones given below.

To be good at elocution, self-confidence is important. Other than that, for beginners, it is suggested that the speech be written down and read repeatedly before delivering it. With constant practice writing the entire speech beforehand will become redundant. Then merely points need be written. And later the speaker can give an extempore speech without much preparation. All these are possible only by sincere practice and continuous effort.

1
Traffic Rules

Like all other aspects of discipline, rules that govern traffic are also essential but difficult to enforce. Fast moving vehicles have the advantage of speed and comfort. But they also have the major drawback of causing fatal accidents due to a momentary lapse.

Traffic rules, similar to all other rules, are framed in such a way that an individual's right ends where the safety of others begins. Keeping to the proper lanes, maintaining the prescribed speed limits, driving,

only when a person has all his/her faculties intact — these are some of the most commonly violated rules. And the result of such violation is shown by the statistics of rising road accidents.

The violators of traffic rules are insensitive, thoughtless and irresponsible. A moment's delay or a slight inconvenience to oneself may save a life. It is not feasible to constantly monitor every driver on the road. Each person should take the responsibility of policing himself/herself. Unfortunately, this is almost never the case. Most

drivers suppress their conscience to such an extent that unless the vigilant eyes of the law are on them they break every rule with impunity.

In big cities the density of vehicular traffic is showing an unprecedented increase. Under these conditions traffic rules should become more efficient and streamlined. Instead, we find that traffic is progressively becoming more chaotic. One solitary vehicle which jumps a red signal may cause a traffic jam involving a few hundred people. It is a point to be

pondered over by every person who takes a vehicle into traffic.

It is sad when a convenience becomes a hindrance or even a fatal trap. In the case of traffic this is the exact situation. To improve this every one of us must follow traffic rules. If a large number of people using the roads set a good example, the small number of rule violators will transform their irregular habits. Instead, if all of us give in to our baser instincts or try to get one up on the road the very concept of traffic rules will be farcical. The choice, in either case, is ours.

2
Coeducation

Educating boys and girls together in the same institution, under the same curriculum structure, is an important step in removing gender distinctions from society. When boys and girls grow up together in the competitive atmosphere of a school/college, they forget the differences of their gender and think of themselves as individuals.

In the past it was thought that girls did not need, or were not even suited for, the kind of education given to boys. But the wave of

equality which swept all over the world has now put an end to such notions. Women seem to be able to perform as well, if not better than, men in all spheres of human endeavour. And for this achievement the system of coeducation is largely responsible.

Of course, segregation in education has its own advantages. Yet the openness and freedom in a classroom of boys and girls often helps the shy ones to flourish. Nature has bestowed different temperamental traits on men and women. To nurture and foster these

rather than suppress them in the name of equality may have harmful effects in the long run. The sensitivity of girls and the rationality of boys need not be viewed as negative gender-based traits. When brought up in segregation such distinctions become strengths for the future balance of human evolution.

Of course, coeducation is the order of the day and it has many beneficial results. But to condemn every other form and to think of coeducation as the only available form is not a balanced attitude. After all, it is the presence of an

alternative, a source of challenge, which makes a system come out in its best form.

3
Pollution

Pollution is the price of progress. There was a time when pollution was unknown and the pristine purity of nature — both external and internal — was unsullied. But the destructive temperament of the human animal cannot tolerate perfection of any variety. Progressive ill-treatment of nature has given rise to a serious health hazard which we call pollution.

Pollution is of various types — air, water, sound, etc. Each one has its specific causes and results, for each there is great concern and concerted attempts at control.

Air pollution is caused by the emission of vehicles, the smoke and other gaseous wastes of factories and the cutting down of trees which maintain atmospheric balance and result in serious health hazards. The majority of people who suffer from respiratory diseases know to their own peril how an impure atmosphere affects health adversely.

Keeping the area around reservoirs and other water bodies neat causes water pollution. The water used for drinking, bathing, etc. needs to be kept pure. Throwing garbage, washing clothes and letting industrial waste or drainage water coming into contact with water for personal use have serious repercussions on health.

Apart from the hazards to the body, pollution also has an evil impact on the mind. In this the foremost is sound pollution. The incessant noise which is a part of urban existence has made us almost

unware of or insensitive to the dangers of noise. The need of silence for peace of mind is realised only when we feel the harmful effects of excessive sound.

So pollution is clearly caused by human agency and its control is also in the hands of human beings. Lack of awareness has caused the situation to deteriorate. Educating people about the hazards of pollution is, therefore, the first and most important step towards its control.

Recitation :

One of the most useful exercises for learners of spoken English is the ability to recite a passage from memory. Memorising the passage requires innumerable readings. Recitation enables articulation. When a recitation is recorded and played back the learner can easily analyse his/her capability to articulate English. Pronunciation, clarity and proper intonation, result from recitation.

It is for this reason that children are encouraged to recite. Recitation facilitates speech. A child who has

barely learnt to speak begins by reciting nursery rhymes. All through school, teachers encourage students to learn poetry by heart and recite it aloud in the class. Often competitions are organised where students recite both poetry or prose. Memorable speeches of famous personalities all over the world are used for prose recitations.

Given are two passages for recitation, one in prose and one in verse which will help the learners begin their exercise in recitation. The first is a paragraph from a speech by an eminent American

intellectual, Emerson, delivered before the senior class in Divinity College, Cambridge, on Sunday, July 15, 1893. The second is a famous poem by Longfellow called "A Psalm of Life."

An Address

In this refulgent summer it has been a luxury to draw the breath of life. The grass grows, the buds burst, the meadow is spotted with fire and gold in the tint of flowers. The air is full of birds, and sweet with the breath of the pine, the balm of Gilead, and the new hay. Night

brings no gloom to the heart with its welcome shade. Through the transparent darkness the stars pour their almost spiritual rays. Man under them seems a young child, and his huge globe a toy. The cool night bathes the world as with a river, and prepares his eyes again for the crimson dawn. The mystery of nature was never displayed more happily. The corn and the wine have been freely dealt to all creatures, and the never-broken silence with which the old bounty goes forward has not yielded yet one word of explanation. One is constrained to

respect the perfection of this world,
in which our senses converse.

A Poem

Tell me not, in mournful
numbers,
Life is but an empty dream.
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what
they seem.

Life is real; life is earnest:
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
was not spoken of the soul.
Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each tomorrow

Finds us farther than today.
Art is long, and time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and
brave,
Still, likes muffled drums, are
beating
Funeral marches to the grave.
In the world's broad field of
battle,
In the bivouac of life
Be not like dumb, driven cattle:
Be a hero in the strife!
Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act-act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God O'erhead!
Lives of great men all remind us

We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time;
Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life solemnain,
A forlorn and shipwrecked
brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.
Let us then, be up, and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour, and to wait.

Debate :

Debate is very similar to elocution in being formal and different. It is more like an extended dialogue/

conversation because two (or more) people speak on a given topic expressing opposing points of view. We have often viewed debates in the assemblies and in the Parliament on TV in the recent years. The ability to put forward an argument and counter another person's point of view are essential skills in a debate. These need to be substantiated by illustrations and common instances. Th most important point to remember in a debate is that the argument should be rational and convincing. Personal opinions, likes and

dislikes have no place in a debate.

Students practice in debating by organising competitions where two speakers form a team — one speaking FOR the given topic and the other speaking AGAINST it. The following examples serve to illustrate the form.

Euthanasia

FOR : Euthanasia, popularly known as mercy killing, is a method of giving people a dignified death. A person who has lived a long, fulfilled and contented life need not suffer and struggle while he waits for inevitable death. Euthanasia is

death by conscious choice when a person realises that he/she has had everything that life has to offer and there is nothing more to look forward to.

Euthanasia is illegal in India, but in countries where people are mature and really free, euthanasia is an accepted mode of terminating life which is meaningless. Euthanasia is only a hastening of a process which is sure to overtake a person sooner or later. It is a decision taken jointly by the person involved and his/her family, friends, advisors and relatives.

For instance, in certain accidents the victim might become totally like a vegetable. Medical science keeps him/her alive by life support systems at a great cost to the resources of the world. Where recovery is impossible then it is better to accept the truth and put an end to life rather than use up the resources which may benefit another person. An old person who suffers for years, unable to see, hear, move or feel, is happier dead than alive.

Euthanasia gives meaning to life which is generally seen as an endless stretch with terrible pain at

its end. By making the concept of mercy killing popular, the fear of death, or rather the fear of the pain and suffering which precede death, will be totally removed. People will look forward to death as a holiday, a pleasure trip which they can take whenever they feel that they have completed their sojourn on earth. It is certainly time to give the matter a serious consideration and come to some kind of consensus.

AGAINST: It is true that euthanasia, as an ideal, seems an excellent solution to the senseless suffering of life where death is only a matter of time. But, more

important than this is the reality of the situation which is far removed from this ideal and fraught with frightening possibilities. It would be no exaggeration to say that euthanasia is legalised murder. It is a weapon in the hands of the misguided to perpetrate evil without fear of punishment.

For instance, an old man who has a large property coveted by his heirs can be killed before his time by forcing him to opt for euthanasia. A person who can recover from an illness can be convinced that his case is hopeless and coerced to accept untimely death. Momentary

failures in life, depressions or strife may lead a person to voluntarily seek mercy killing.

In this way, the legal and the medical system will both become traders in death rather than the upholders of life. The very act of living will become a progress towards death and not an activity which people undertake with interest and zest. There is no justification in making death so easily available because the choice of death is almost an impossible one to exercise for every human being.

The point about maturity being a criterion for the effective use of

euthanasia is rather hazy and irrational. A person may speak in support of mercy killing all his/her life; but when it comes to practice the same person may not have either the courage nor the conviction strong enough to end his/her own life by conscious choice. Therefore, euthanasia is best avoided and natural death should not be interfered with.

Group Discussion :

This form of spoken English is popular in competitive exams. Apart from testing fluency, the range of ideas and ability to think

rationally, this exercise tests the quality of leadership and other similar character traits in the participants. The following group discussion will serve as a guideline to learners.

Role of Values

A: Values can be described as the principles or the philosophy which guides to live a proper life. A person who has values does what is right while a person who has no values does whatever he wants without discriminating between right or wrong.

B: Yes, I agree with you that values are guidelines to righteousness. But certain values are also negative. These days children are taught selfishness when they are encouraged to get the best rank, the best job and the best of everything at whatever cost.

C: Here I find an important point about values — how they are acquired. Parents, teachers and elders are important sources of values. Not only do we learn from what they teach us but we also emulate what we observe

in them. These may be traits which are both good and bad.

D: Many values are traditional — inherited from our past. These are the primary values such as obedience, honesty, loyalty, etc. Of course, in traditional values, the problem is that they sometimes become useless with the passing of time.

E: Then we must either contemporise them or do away with such values. For instance, faith in the Christian cosmology about the beginning of the world was doubted after certain scientific discoveries.

But with the passage of time the story of Genesis was reinterpreted so that faith could be reaffirmed.

B: But do you think faith is a value? I have often seen that faith is the cause of a superior attitude in people. It is also the cause of strife between groups who have different systems of faith. I feel that faith is more of a hindrance than help in an organised existence.

E: What you are talking about is blind faith. I was referring to that faith which sustains life and gives it meaning. Faith also

means faith in oneself, not only faith in the divine, and faith in other human beings which is the cornerstone of social life.

A: I know what you mean. When we get into a bus we don't ask the driver to show us his licence. We put our faith in his ability to take us safely to our destination.

D: I think we should discuss the role of values, which is the topic given to us. We seem to be digressing by discussing individual instances.

B: Not really. No topic can be discussed without illustration.

Faith was just one such illustration. Now let us speak about the values acquired from the media. These days everyone spends hours watching TV. Therefore, the values depicted there have a lasting impact on the minds of the viewers.

C: The media seems to be encouraging negative values alone. Rarely do we see a programme which stresses positive values. I saw a programme where an honest judge and his family are murdered because the judge

dares to sentence a criminal to life imprisonment. After such a depiction, will anyone continue to be honest?

A: What you are saying is an indirect method of teaching values—the negative is stressed to imply the positive. Often this is a more acceptable method than the direct one because people get antagonised if you preach moral lessons to them.

E: I think the time allotted for this group discussion is up. Let me conclude by saying that values have an important role in the

structure of a society. In a society where individuals have the right values progress is assured. Where values are lax the very existence of society is threatened. Therefore, values must be preserved and transmitted with care and concern.

Public Speaking :

One of the most impressive forms of spoken English is encountered in public speeches. A public speaker is able to use language to sway his/her audience to his/her own mode of thinking. The kind of vocabulary

and expression that is used in public speaking is also exclusive. Public speaking needs perfection in accent and intonation because most often such a speech implies more than it says .

The ability to speak in front of a large gathering is the acid test for an aspirant speaking English. It needs confidence, control over the language and ability to say the same thing in ten different ways without sounding repetitive.

Public speeches can be heard in a variety of contexts — political, academic, religious, etc. Mark Antony's speech in Shakespeare's

play *Julius Caesar* which begins with the words: "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears." Or Swami Vivekananda's historic debut at the Chicago Parliament of Religions with the words: "Sisters and Brothers of America," are examples of public speeches worthy of note, especially for students who want to speak English.

One example is given below for practice.

Distinguished guests, invitees, friends, ladies and gentlemen! I stand before you to talk about the need for awareness among citizens for proper functioning of a

democracy. We pride ourselves in being the largest democracy in the world. Can we say that we are also the most efficient democracy?

This question has assumed varying degrees of importance since the time of Independence. There was great complacency among citizens when a single party under a single leader could rule the nation for full five years. The voice of dissent was a lone, stray one rarely heard with any conviction.

But the scenario has changed drastically over the decades. The single party has divided and subdivided itself quite a few times

to form other strong options for occupying the treasury benches. Apart from these national parties, numerous regional ones, almost in every state, have acquired a status which can make or mar the democratic system.

Of late it has been said repeatedly that democracy in India is afflicted with serious maladies. Many of these are due to the unawareness of voters who can be led in any direction like dumb sheep. In such a case, democracy can never succeed because it no longer represents the people's choice. The strength of money and muscle

cannot ensure the right kind of governance.

Therefore, the need of the hour is to see that every citizen who exercises his/her choice in electing a government is aware of what is at stake. Most of the issues which are blown out of proportion are actually not very important. The key issues such as poverty, illiteracy, job opportunities, scientific and technological progress, etc., seem to take a second place to things like non-secularism, etc. In a country where numerous religious communities continue to live in

peace barring a few isolated politically-motivated incidents, such issues are mere political gimmicks. Being aware of such things is the beginning of creating an efficient democracy.

Narration :

The art of story telling is an important aspect of spoken English. To be able to present a realistic narration orally so as to capture not only the attention, but also the imagination of the listener (s) is no mean talent. The art of story telling, especially verbally, is almost as old

as human civilization. The most primitive tribes also practised this, narration which is both varied and verbal.

For telling a story effectively a range of vocabulary, wide tonal variation, vivid description, realistic characterisation are all important. Narration is a culmination of various language skills. Originality is not an essential criterion. Traditions of story telling generally have some popular narratives which are improvised and contemporised by each new generation, without altering the basic framework.

For instance, our contemporary narrative medium, the cinema, makes extensive use of epic traditions, characters and situations. Only the form is new, the content is tried and tested over centuries Valmiki's *Ramayan* or Tulsidas's version or the present one serialised on TV some years ago all have their validity, especially as an interesting process of learning a language.

Therefore, for those who aspire to speak good English one of the skills to be acquired is the ability to narrate a story properly. In real life situations the need to tell a story often arises. A learner should be

able to handle such a contingency effortlessly with a little practice.

Some examples are given below.

1
The Monkey and the Crocodile

Once there was a monkey who lived on a tree on the bank of a river. In the same river lived a crocodile and his wife. The monkey jumped from branch to branch eating the sweet fruits. Which grew on the tree. Sometimes a few of these would fall into the river. The crocodile would eat those and enjoy the taste. Soon the monkey and the crocodile became friends.

One day the crocodile decided to take home a few of the sweet fruit which fell into the water. He thought his wife would love to eat them. And he was right. The lady crocodile was overjoyed at the wonderful taste of the fruit. She asked her husband where he found them.

"Oh, my dear," said the crocodile, "I have been eating these for a long time now. I have a friend, the monkey, who lives on the tree where they grow. He lives on these and gives them to me whenever I ask him."

The wife heard all this. She was a very greedy crocodile. She thought, "If the fruit is so delicious, how much more delicious will be the heart of the monkey who lives on them." She was eager to devour the monkey's heart.

She expressed her desire to her husband. How could he refuse her anything? He asked her how her desire could be fulfilled.

"You invite him to our house for dinner. I'll manage the rest," she said gleefully. The obedient husband went to do as he was told.

On reaching the tree, the crocodile called out, "Dear friend,

will you come with me? My wife has invited you to dinner."

The monkey could not refuse such a tempting offer. He was bored with his own company. It would be fun to spend an evening with his dear friend, the crocodile, and his wife. But how would he reach their house? He could not swim.

When he told this to the crocodile, he laughed aloud. "Don't worry, my friend. I shall carry you home on my back."

The monkey could not find fault with the crocodile's scheme. He jumped onto his friend's back and

both of them set off for the crocodile's house.

On the way, they chattered about many things. In the course of their conversation, the crocodile foolishly let out his wife's secret — to eat the monkey's heart.

The innocent crocodile had not realised that by fulfilling his wife's wish he was about to kill his dear friend. But the monkey was very intelligent. He knew at once that he was in grave danger. But he was helpless to attempt escape. They were in the middle of the river. If he tried to jump off the crocodile's

back he would drown. If he continued to sit there he would be eaten by the crocodile's wife.

The poor monkey was terrified. He knew he had to keep his cool and think of a plan to save himself. For some time there was silence between the two. Suddenly the monkey had a brilliant idea. He said, "My dear friend, I am happy to know your wife wants my heart. I shall gladly give it to her. But, unfortunately, I have left my heart behind on the tree. Why don't you take me back there so that I can get it along."

The crocodile believed every word spoken by the monkey. Without a fuss he turned round and started swimming towards the bank. The monkey breathed a sigh of relief. As soon as the crocodile neared the bank, he jumped onto the nearest branch. At last he was safe.

Then the monkey turned to the crocodile and said, "My dear crocodile. You have betrayed my friendship. For your wife you were willing to sacrifice your friend."

The crocodile was puzzled. He said, "Where is your heart? Take it

quickly and let us go. My wife must be waiting anxiously."

"Oh, you foolish fellow!" said the monkey scornfully "Don't you know that a heart is always inside the body. My heart was with me when I sat on your back. But your evil wife would have killed me in order to savour my heart. To escape death, I fooled you by saying I had left my heart behind. Now you can go back to your precious wife and tell her about your foolishness. And never let me see you in the vicinity of this tree again."

At last the crocodile understood how he had been duped. He felt

ashamed of his conduct. He looked wistfully at the monkey. But after that day he never got a single fruit of that wonderful tree. He silently cursed himself for having given in to the greed of his wife and lost a friend.

2
The Golden Deer

To grant a boon to Queen Kaykeyi, King Dasharatha had to send his eldest son, Rama, to exile into the forest for fourteen years. Sita, his wife, and younger brother, Lakshmana accompanied him. The

three of them lived a simple life in the forest.

But the evil forces could not bear to see them happy. Ravana's sister lusted after Rama and then Lakshmana. As a result, the brave warrior punished her by cutting off her ears and nose. To take revenge brother Ravana decided to steal Rama's wife, Sita. He sent one of his trusted followers to lure the two men away so that he could do his dark deed.

One day Sita saw this demon in the form of a golden deer. She was entranced. She did not realise that it was a ploy to abduct her. She

rushed to her husband and pleaded with him to get her the golden deer.

Rama was reluctant. He knew that a golden deer was not a product of nature. There must be some hidden danger in such an unnatural phenomenon. He tried to tell his beloved wife that she should not be tempted by the golden deer. But Sita refused to listen to reason. She first pleaded and then demanded the coveted object. Finally, in helpless desperation, Rama went away deeper into the forest to catch the golden deer.

The crafty deer took Rama further and further away from his

hut. Against his better judgement, Rama followed the deer. When he took out his bow and shot the deer, in a last bid to isolate Sita, the animal cried out in Rama's voice, "Lakshmana, Lakshmana, save me, help me! Oh dear brother, please help me!"

Sita and Lakshmana both heard this desperate cry for help. Lakshmana ignored the plea. He had been told by Rama to guard Sita. Therefore, leaving the hut was out of question for him. He had full faith that Rama could take care of himself without any help. So he remained unmoved by the heart- rending cry.

Lakshmana's calm attitude shocked Sita. She said, "Please go immediately. Your brother is in grave danger. Can't you hear him? Please rush to his aid. What are you doing here, idling away, when your brother wants you urgently?"

"I cannot leave you and go? I have to follow the order of my brother. Please don't ask me to go."

Sita could bear it no longer. She began to insult the poor Lakshmana.

Lakshmana had looked upon Sita as his own mother. He could not bear this accusation. He thought for a moment and said, "Since you insist, I'll go. But brother Rama will

be very upset that I left you unprotected. I'll draw a line outside the hut. If you remain within it you will be safe. Please promise me that you won't step out beyond this point."

"Yes, yes! I'll promise you anything. But go quickly. Go and see what has befallen your brother," said Sita.

Lakshmana did as he was told. With a heavy heart and heavier feet he walked deep into the forest. His heart was filled with trepidation. His anxiety was not for his brother but for the unprotected Sita. He sent up a silent prayer for her safety.

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